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ABSTRACT

Expansion and modification of a 27-item Delphi derived form for assessing campus police performance resulted in a 43-item form to measure job performance of correctional officers in the Georgia Department of Corrections. The self-rating scale, with a reliability coefficient of .995 (n=120) was subjected to factor analysis and varimax rotation and was found to yield two primary factors accounting for 82% and 2.5% of the variance respectively. Factor one was labeled General Job Responsibilities and factor two was titled Communications Facilitation. Two supervisor ratings were also solicited. Correlations between self- and supervisor-ratings were negligible. Several hypotheses were advanced to account for the lack of convergence, including lack of controls within correctional institutions for filling out rating forms and the many institutional differences which exist throughout the state penal system. In general, however, the preliminary analyses of the rating form were encouraging. (Author/KA)

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RATINGS OF JOB PERFORMANCE OF GEORGIA CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

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RATINGS OF JOB PERFORMANCE OF GEORGIA CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS[1]

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Expansion and modification of a 27-item Delphi-derived form for assessing campus police performance (Kissiah, 1973) resulted in a 43-item form to measure job performance of correctional officers in the Georgia Department of Corrections.

The self-rating scale, with a reliability coefficient of .995 (n = 120) was subjected to factor analysis and varimax rotation and was found to yield two primary factors accounting for 82% and 2.5% of the variance respectively. Factor one was labeled "General Job Responsibilities" and factor two was titled "Communications Facilitation".

Two supervisor ratings were also solicited for each of the self-rated subjects in the initial sample. Although reliabilities for the supervisor ratings were high (.998) and commonality between supervisors was adequate ($r = .47$, $n = 83$, $p < .001$) correlations between self and supervisor ratings were negligible ($r = .068$, $n = 74$, p = n.s.).

Implications for these findings are explored, and hypotheses to account for the lack of convergence between self and supervisor ratings are offered.

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[1]Funds for this research were supplied in part by a block grant award from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration to the Georgia Department of Corrections/Offender Rehabilitation.

RATINGS OF JOB PERFORMANCE OF GEORGIA CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS[1]

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To assess the performance of Georgia correctional officers, a review of the literature with regards to job performance ratings was undertaken. It was generally revealed that relatively few behavioral rating forms for correctional officers or "guards" had been constructed. Most existant forms called for highly subjective statements on ambiguous constructs.

The Delphi technique has been defined by Helmer (1966) as a "method for the systematic solicitation and collation of expert opinions...applicable whenever policies and plans have to be based on informed judgmert, and thus to some extent to virtually any decision making process (p. 1)".

The Delphi Technique solicits opinions as to relevant task variables and the importance of each from acknowledged experts in a group, refines their initial ratings, and pools them into a group concensus. Using factor-analytic techniques, Kissiah (1973) took a Delphi sample to design a rating form for the assessment of campus police performance.

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[1]The author wishes to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Dr. Elliot E. Entin and Drusilla M. Gallager in the conducting of this research. Requests for reprints should be directed to the author at Staff Development Center, 270 Field Street (Soule Hall), Athens, Georgia 30602.

Because the Kissiah form was relatively behavioral, the 27-item inventory was expanded and modified into a 43-item form to measure job performance of correctional officers in the Georgia correctional system.

This was accomplished by talking to wardens and security personnel throughout the Georgia penal system, as well as by interactions with correctional officers during training sessions.

The 43-item form was presented to correctional officers completing a 3-week in-service/pre-service training course at the Staff Development Center in Athens, Georgia. Each trainee was asked to rate himself as to his performance on relevant correctional skills. Correctional officers who had been employed for less than a month were deleted from the analysis.

The self-rating scale was subjected to analysis and yielded a coefficient alpha of .995 (n = 120). Factor analysis utilizing 1's on the diagonal and a varimax rotation procedure delineated two primary factors accounting for 82% and 2.5% of the variance respectively.

All items which correlated .80 or above with the factors were utilized to label that factor or dimension. Factor one had three such items:

Uses authority and position only within limits of the job;

Takes reasonable care of departmental equipment; and

Is consistent in his performance.

Factor one was tentatively titled "General Job Responsibilities" while factor two (2.5% of variance) was labeled "Communications Facilitation". Items correlating highest with this factor were:

Able to relate well to offenders;

Has good verbal skills; and

Offers suggestions to improve things.

The names of two immediate supervisors were also obtained from each correctional officer as he entered the orientation program. Rating forms were mailed out later to each of the indicated supervisors under appropriate cover letter from administrators. The warden disseminated the rating forms down the line of authority within the institutions.

The return rate for the supervisory ratings was generally good, though it was impossible to obtain ratings from all designated supervisors. Reliabilities were computed for the supervisor ratings, and although they were high (.998) and commonality between supervisors was adequate ($r = .47$, $n = 83$, $p < .001$), correlations performed between overall self ratings (one item) and the overall supervisor ratings (one item) was negligible ($r = .068$, $n = 74$, $p = n.s.$).

Several hypotheses may be advanced to account for the lack of convergence on ratings.

First, there were no controls within the correctional institution on filling out these rating forms; supervisors filled out the form at each separate institution and mailed them back to the Staff Development Center. There was no control over supervisors cooperating on ratings, on standardizing dissemination procedures other than by written instruction, and peer pressure may have

had an effect on these procedures. Additionally, although the ratings themselves were sanctioned by the Commissioner and respective wardens, there was no way of knowing if line supervisors filled out the ratings in a honest manner because of possible consequences.

Second, there are many institutional differences which exist throughout the state penal system. Maximum security prisons differ greatly from facilities for the youthful offender, or the minimum security inmate. Because supervisory functions may have been different at these facilities, variability may have been increased among raters.

In general, the results from the supervisor ratings indicated the possibility of a halo effect -- it seemed that if a supervisor liked or approved of an employee, he tended to rate him high across all items and did not discriminate. The converse appears to be true for low rated employees.

As a population, supervisors differ from line correctional officers who comprised this sample. Supervisory personnel tend to be older,[1] more conservative, and exhibit lower educational levels.[2] Correctional officers coming through the training session tended to be younger, better educated, more flexible, and verbalized about difficulties with their supervisors in terms of policies and techniques. In short, supervisors and employees tended to see the work of a correctional officer in different ways --

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1-2 Utilizing a 1971 demographic sample, supervisors indicated a mean age of 46 years as compared with a mean age of 36 years for a line correctional officer. Educational levels are contrasted at 10.6 for supervisors and 11.7 for line officers. These data are taken from a 1971 report on Georgia correctional personnel. The present Orientation Training program sample exhibited a mean age of 34.26 years and an educational level of 11.92 years.

line supervisors taking a much more inflexible position towards change than their subordinates.

Several employees also indicated they had only one immediate supervisor, and that for a second choice they listed the deputy warden or superintendent. In some cases, these "supervisors" might not know the employee well enough to render valid judgments on the rating form.

Because of these variables, the results on the supervisor ratings may have been confounded. In general, however, the preliminary analyses are encouraging. Correctional officers have provided verbal feedback that they feel comfortable with the rating form, and additional validation including on-the-job criteria will be performed. Hopefully, the addition of other objective performance measures in relation to the rating results will increase the validity and useability of this form.

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TABLE 1

CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS:

JOB PERFORMANCE SELF-RATINGS

ITEM	MEAN (RANGE = 0-4)	S.D.	CORRELATIONS: FACTOR I (GENERAL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES) 82% VARIANCE	CORRELATIONS: FACTOR II (COMMUNICATIONS FACILITATION) 2.5% VARIANCE
1. Uses authority and position only within limits of job	2.70	1.69	.81	.45
2. Uses force only when absolutely necessary	2.79	1.74	.76	.51
3. Takes reasonable care of department equipment	2.83	1.70	.84	.47
4. Is accepting of changes in methods and procedures	2.36	1.54	.74	.50
5. Exhibits effort beyond basic requirements of job	2.20	1.59	.47	.68
6. Exercises good judgment in supervising offenders	2.55	1.58	.75	.55
7. Sizes up emergency situations quickly	2.43	1.56	.75	.50
8. Considers alternatives and responds with correct procedures	2.36	1.51	.71	.60
9. Exhibits patience with others	2.36	1.52	.73	.53
10. Exhibits honesty and ethical practice in all contacts	2.61	1.64	.78	.53
11. Can explain the reasons behind procedures used	2.32	1.60	.47	.75
12. Loyal to department and administration	2.70	1.64	.77	.54
13. Voices no overt racial or ethnic bias	1.88	1.66	.60	.33

TABLE 1 (Continued)
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ITEM	MEAN (RANGE = 0-4)	S.D.	CORRELATIONS: FACTOR 1 (GENERAL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES) 82% VARIANCE	CORRELATIONS: FACTOR II (COMMUNICATIONS FACILITATION) 2.5% VARIANCE
14. Rational and logical; easy to communicate with	2.40	1.58	.75	.78
15. Accepts and acts on constructive criticism	2.35	1.63	.65	.54
16. Acts on his own initiative; doesn't have to be told always	2.31	1.55	.73	.49
17. Can be depended on to do what he is asked to do	2.85	1.75	.58	.75
18. Works well individually without direct supervision	2.68	1.63	.75	.58
19. Has good posture	2.12	1.47	.52	.70
20. Demonstrates good ability in handling trouble	2.38	1.57	.69	.60
21. Exhibits personal courage in dangerous situations	2.34	1.56	.59	.70
22. Demonstrates good driving habits	2.54	1.64	.71	.58
23. Keeps self in good physical condition	2.22	1.57	.68	.52
24. Shows respect for other officers	2.75	1.69	.78	.56
25. Drives safely in emergency as well as normal situations	2.60	1.66	.59	.74
26. Good observations habits; detects unusual conditions	2.39	1.54	.73	.59
27. Able to relate well to offenders	2.30	1.55	.47	.81
28. Offenders respond well to his communications	2.20	1.43	.69	.64

TABLE 1 (Continued)
Page 3

ITEM	MEAN (RANGE = 0-4)	S.D.	CORRELATIONS: FACTOR I (GENERAL JOB RESPONSIBILITIES) 82% VARIANCE	CORRELATIONS: FACTOR II (COMMUNICATIONS FACILITATION) 2.5% VARIANCE
29. Is able to handle complex tasks	2.26	1.42	.73	.61
30. Is thorough in his work	2.60	1.61	.79	.55
31. Pays attention to details in his working area	2.80	1.73	.56	.79
32. Quality of work generally meets institutional standards	2.68	1.63	.77	.58
33. Is consistent in his performance	2.66	1.64	.84	.50
34. Has no difficulty with follow officers	2.09	1.65	.59	.46
35. Has good verbal skills	2.23	1.51	.49	.80
36. Has confidence in his abilities	2.62	1.65	.78	.54
37. Assumes responsibility for new tasks	2.60	1.61	.73	.62
38. Is relaxed	2.25	1.52	.70	.56
39. Handles problems with little frustration	2.29	1.49	.56	.75
40. Can work well under pressure	2.41	1.56	.72	.59
41. Is punctual to work	2.55	1.70	.76	.47
42. Offers suggestions to improve things	2.21	1.54	.43	.83
43. Is helpful to others	2.36	1.61	.71	.50